Environmental Issues Committee

DRAFT Priorities & Recommendations

(August 22, 2002)

Issue: Meaningful information about exposures to environmental agents is difficult to collect. As a result, establishing linkages between environment and cancer is difficult.

Problem Statement:

Recommendations:

- Enhance the capacity of State public health and other laboratories to test blood & urine samples for evidence of exposure to environmental agents
- Improve the accessibility of environmental monitoring data by computerizing databases and geo-coding data for identification of geographic areas with higher levels of environmental carcinogens.
- Expand the number of air toxics monitoring sites to establish community specific exposure data
- Monitor pesticide applications and require explicit data to be registered by time and specific location of application
- Make existing regulatory data collection efforts more useful to cancer hazard assessment and tracking
- Develop a comprehensive, private-well monitoring program
- Support the development of an Environmental Health Tracking System for Maryland

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Issues: Limited information on the effectiveness of control measures exists for exposures to known carcinogens in the environment, including environmental tobacco smoke, radon, pesticides, dietary carcinogens, air toxics and carcinogens in drinking water.

Problem Statement:

Recommendations:

- Track and link results of control measures and health impacts

- Measure implementation of policies and regulations that limit the introduction of toxics into the environment

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Issues: Limited information for occupational cancers.

Problem Statement:

Recommendations:

- Match employee d-base with cancer (industry, trade org, etc.)
- Legal barriers to access
- Interdisciplinary task force to find optimal occupational cancer surveillance

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Issue: Collaboration between academic research institutions and state and county public health departments is critical to advancement in our understanding and control of environmental cancers.

Problem Statement:

Recommendations:

- Work with the University of Maryland, Johns Hopkins, and other educational institutions to train more physicians and environmental scientists in occupational and environmental cancer research
- Improve collaboration between research and public health practice
- Develop a formal and adequately funded linkage between academic and government resources to bring the teaching, research and practice agendas closer together. Explore several possible models to make this happen in the short and long term.
- Support MD participation in development of Environmental Health Tracking System proposed by CDC/EPA
- Grand rounds in environmental health

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Issue: Infections that play a role in the development of specific cancers need to recognized and addressed.

Problem Statement:

Recommendations:

- Encourage screening for HPV
- Promote immunization for Hepatitis B
- Improved control of blood borne infections
- Encourage screening and treatment for H pylori

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Issue: Differences in cancer rates and exposures to environmental carcinogens exist among communities of different socioeconomic status and ethnicity. Exclusion of Native Americans, Hispanics, new immigrants and other minorities arising from a lack of participation of these groups in our health care system has resulted in inaccurate demographic data regarding cancer incidence.

Problem Statement:

Recommendations:

- Enhance the community planning processes
- From "brownfields" to walkable communities. Ensure environmental conditions are planned to formally reduce health risks in the community planning and zoning stages. Take a look at model laws in other states and develop strategies here in Maryland.
- Continue efforts to document differences in cancer rates among...
- Expand efforts to provide cancer screening and healthcare services to populations with limited access
- Make healthcare services more culturally acceptable and appropriate